

2020 Emergency Response Report Indiana Criminal Justice Institute

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Summary

While The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (“ICJI”) was not immune to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ICJI learned during the course of the pandemic that it is well-positioned to respond to an emergency situation and to continue normal business operations even in the absence of the ability to work from its brick and mortar office building. ICJI did not suspend or reduce any in-office operations or services during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the exception of the public’s ability to visit the ICJI office in person for a portion of the pandemic, as required by Executive Order. ICJI did and has continued to suspend all nonessential in person subgrantee monitoring for both state and federal grants, but continues to conduct such monitoring remotely.

ICJI is in the process of finalizing an updated Continuity of Operations Plan to address emergency situations and to better position itself to be prepared to handle a variety of unusual events that may arise in the future. ICJI has also updated several existing policies to ensure that they are flexible enough to account for any future emergency situations. The Plan and other policies are being updated based on lessons learned from operations and guidance received as a result of the pandemic. ICJI intends to continue routinely reviewing its policies and procedures to ensure that they provide ICJI with the latitude to take necessary steps to respond to any future emergencies. Overall, ICJI believes that it is in a position to continue delivering great government service in the event of future emergencies.

Questions 1-4

- (1) Overview of which, if any, operations or services were reduced or suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the following information:**
 - (a) Whether the suspension or reduction was required by an Executive Order or an internal agency decision?**
 - (b) To the extent applicable, include citations for the laws, rules, and policies affected by or authorizing the reduction or suspension.**

ICJI did not suspend or reduce any in-office operations or services during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the exception of closing its office to the public for a portion of the pandemic and suspension of all nonessential in person subgrantee monitoring visits. The closure of the office and telework of employees were required by Executive Orders 20-08 and 20-09. Even during this

time period, a select few employees of ICJI came to the physical office space to retrieve mail and ensure that normal operations could continue to be carried out.

It bears mentioning that ICJI is subject to a multitude of federal rules and regulations surrounding the grant funds that it receives, and changes to these rules and regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the day-to-day operations of ICJI. However, ICJI has excluded reference to these items as they cannot be addressed by State-level changes.

(2) Overview on preparations to address future emergencies and recovery from emergencies based on the state agency's experience with the COVID-19 pandemic.

(a) To the extent applicable, include citations for the laws, rules, and policies that are affected by or authorize the preparations.

ICJI is in the process of finalizing an updated Continuity of Operations Plan that addresses future emergencies by developing a strategy for reacting to and recovering from said emergencies. ICJI is utilizing the challenges faced and lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic to position itself to better address other unique challenges that may arise in the future. ICJI has also updated its employee telework policy to provide more flexibility for employees in the event of another emergency situation that requires ICJI to suspend in-office operations. ICJI is in the process of reviewing its other policies and procedures and is committed to continuously updating these policies and procedures to ensure that they are written in a way that affords ICJI the ability to respond to future emergency situations as they arise.

(3) Recommendations, if any, for legislation that may be needed to help ensure the agency is prepared to address future emergencies.

ICJI believes it has the necessary authority to create policies and plans based on future guidance or orders issued by the Governor to address potential future emergencies.

(4) Recommendations, if any, for legislation to permanently repeal or modify any regulations or laws that were or are partially or fully suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

No laws or regulations that are specifically and exclusively applicable to ICJI were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. ICJI found that Executive Order 20-04, which allowed public meetings to be conducted remotely with only one member physically present, was particularly helpful in light of the fact that ICJI is governed by a Board of Trustees that meets on a quarterly basis. Allowing public meetings to be conducted remotely without the mandatory minimum attendance requirements that are currently set out in IC 5-14-1.5-3.6 would prove useful for ICJI in the future. Beyond that, there was no direct impact to ICJI from regulations or laws that were suspended.